

# **A Supervisor's Guide to Assessing Performance**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>Sample Performance Standards</b>	4
AST	5
Non-AST Engineer	10
Administrative/Professional	12
Technician	16
Clerical	19
<b>Distinguishing Levels of Performance</b>	22
<b>OHCM Contacts</b>	26
<b>Appendix</b>	27

# A Supervisor's Guide to Assessing Performance

## Introduction

Assessing individual employee performance can be challenging. With five possible performance levels from which to choose (**Distinguished**, **Accomplished**, **Fully Successful**, **Needs Improvement** and **Unacceptable**), supervisors sometimes find it difficult to distinguish between shades of achievement. The following is a general guide that should help alleviate some of the trouble you may encounter when assigning both the critical element and summary rating levels for the rating cycle. Because most of the positions located at LaRC can be categorized as AST, Non-AST, Administrative/Professional, Technician or Clerical, this guide also provides sample performance standards and indicators that can be used and adapted based on the nature of the work your employees perform within those categories.

This document has been revised to implement changes effective for the 2012-13 performance cycle. The revised changes to this guide include:

- Eliminate the Program/Project Function Objective (PPFO) and replace with Critical Element(s). There should be a minimum of two critical elements, and at least one that must align with organizational/agency strategic goal(s).
- Eliminate non-critical elements.
- Eliminate Communications and Collaboration/Teamwork as mandatory separate elements. Standards reflecting each may be embedded within the critical elements or used as performance indicators.
- Establish/document performance indicators at the "Significantly Exceeds" or Level 5 for each critical element. Indicators are *information and examples* (not all inclusive) reflecting performance that may meet expectations for the level at which they are written.

## Sample Performance Standards

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In an effort to assist you, the following sample generic performance standards were developed at the “Meets Expectations” level for the performance elements required for non-SES, ST, and SL employees who hold positions in the each of the five job categories mentioned above. Suggested measures are included.

A Critical Element is the heart or core of the job each employee performs; the reason the position exists. A Critical Element is deemed as such when the work assignment or responsibility is of such importance that failure to achieve it leads to a determination that the employee’s overall performance is **Unacceptable**. For this reason, failure of a Critical Element results in the need for a performance-based action. LaRC’s position is that comprehensive performance plans should have a minimum of two separate Critical Elements. There is no limit on the maximum number. Also, at least one Critical Element must be aligned to the Agency’s Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.nasa.gov/news/budget/index.html>) and to organizational goals and objectives. Collaboration/Teamwork, Communication, Creativity and Innovation, and Professional Stature are not required Critical Elements. They may be integrated into the Performance plan as part of the Performance Standards as needed, or be used in describing performance indicators.

**Again, these sample generic standards serve only as a guide or “conceptual definition” to help supervisors in developing actual results-oriented, measurable performance standards tailored to the specific requirements of the employee’s position. They are not intended to substitute for a supervisor’s judgment, or consultation with an HR professional.**

# AST Positions

**NOTE: The following are only sample performance elements that may be used as a conceptual guide for development of job related standards for your staff.**

**Critical Element** (Describe the function or job responsibility/duties to be performed)

Below are examples of “Meets Expectations” or Level 3 standards that could be used to address a Critical Element.

- Maintains leading edge awareness in technical field. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Leads or participates in technical advances by supporting Center or Agency programs and projects or by formulating new programs and projects. Keeps current by reading articles, books, or attending symposia, pursuing academic advancement or publishing papers in technical field.*
- Meets project/program milestones within established deadlines and budget guidelines (March 20--). Notifies supervisor in advance of timeline or budget changes. *(Time-based/Cost Effectiveness)*
  - *Measure: Successful completion of project milestone(s) by meeting specific requirements by established deadline and within budget. Consistent status reports are provided to key parties and supervisor of any major changes to schedule/budget.*
- Submits 1-2 new research proposal(s) by March 20--. *(Quality/Quantity/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Research proposal meets quality standards at level of profession and within LaRC and NASA guidelines.*
- Attends 1- 2 scientific meetings to present accepted research results. *(Quality/Quantity)*
  - *Measure: Produces accepted research by scientific community and presents accurate, clear and well-organized presentation with positive feedback from participants.*

- Serves on peer-review(s) to formalize thorough and independent assessments and evaluations to enhance product results that meet project/program specifications and requirements. A thorough assessment includes identification and analysis of the issue, alternative solutions, and a recommended course of action with justification. *(Quality/Quantity)*
- Serves on 1-2 scientific review panels to formalize thorough and independent assessment and evaluation that produce accepted recommendation(s) and/or solution(s) to complex scientific problems. A thorough assessment includes identification and analysis of the issue, alternative solutions, and a recommended course of action with supporting documentation. *(Quality/Quantity)*

- *Measure: Positive feedback by panel members; recommendations/solutions are accepted by scientific community. \*\**

Although Collaboration/Teamwork; Communication; Innovation and Creativity, and Professional Stature are not required Critical Elements, they are integral to accomplishing most if not all assignments. Therefore, supervisors are encouraged to incorporate them in the performance standards. Below are examples of “Meets Expectations” or Level 3 standards for each category.

#### **Sample Collaboration and Teamwork performance standards:**

- Independently collaborates with the scientific community to assess requirements, to provide necessary products/services, and to address and resolve problems that impact the project/program. *(Quality/Quantity)*
  - *Measure: Positive feedback from customers and action taken in providing services/products in meeting negotiated agreement. \*\**
- Participates in 1 - 2 local, national, and/or global activities to share current accepted research and to develop collaborative alliances for creating new research efforts for the Center. *(Quality/Quantity)*
  - *Measure: Participation in activities and acceptance of shared research by local/national/global community; receive positive feedback from customers; development of new research project(s). Internal and external recognition from internal and external entities for technical research achievements.*

- Collaborates within the Center and NASA, scientific, industry, and academic communities, to establish, build, and maintain positive relations to ensure project/program milestone(s) are met. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Brings in 1-2 new projects for the Center. Establishes 1-2 new business partnerships within the rating cycle. Positive feedback received from NASA and non-NASA customer and successful completion of project/program milestone(s). \*\**

### **Sample Communication performance standards:**

- Oral and written communications (including electronic communications) demonstrate understanding and knowledge of scientific topic; responds within 72 hours to email and other written requests. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Communications convey in plain English the system benefit and value of the project or innovation/invention; generates interest from customers, colleagues and/or the public.*
- Interacts with colleagues and management, keeping all parties informed of progress on assigned projects/programs. Prepares and submits monthly status report to all principal parties by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Quality and timeliness of status report. Articulates alternative solution paths in the design process to customers.*
- Writes and submits 1-2 proposals in accordance with Center and Agency requirements and guidelines that are presented to and accepted by Committee. *(Quality/Quantity)*
  - *Measure: Quality of proposal(s) meets Center and Agency guidelines without substantial revisions and proposal is accepted by Committee review. Acceptance includes revisions to proposal recommended by Committee.*
- Produces 1 – 2 publications (i.e., proceedings, NASA publications, patent submittals, peer-reviewed journals) in accordance with NASA and LaRC standards/requirements/guidelines. *(Quality/Quantity)*
  - *Measure: Publication meets LaRC and NASA guidelines and is accepted for publication.*

- Written materials/publications follow NASA's prescribed standards and style and are infrequently (e.g., no more than twice) returned for substantial revision. *(Quality)*

#### **Sample Innovation and Creativity performance standards:**

- Implements new ideas, methods or processes to improve Center or Agency practices, projects or programs to advance the state-of-the-art within the technical field.
  - *Measure: Sponsors or participates in a technical intelligence effort or 'idea' session. Sponsors or presents at technical seminars, workshops and symposia. Obtains a patent for a new invention. Authors or contributes to a white paper or article published in a peer reviewed journal on cutting edge technology or ideas.*
- Leads or serves as team member on organization's Business Process Improvement Team to recommend or enhance organization's current or new processes/procedures. Leverages the capabilities of colleagues to foster innovative thinking and to reconcile conflicting stakeholder interests. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Active leadership or participation on team.*
- Initiates plan of action by September 20-- that identifies effective and valid recommendations, improvements, and solutions to ensure project/program milestones are met and within budget guidelines. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Quality of plan – well-written, concise plan that provides recommendations, improvements, and solutions that are accepted and implemented by established deadline(s).*

#### **Sample Professional Stature performance standards:**

- Contributes to the technical discipline internal and external to the Agency.
- Authors journal publications, reports, complex policies or decisions that impact the field or Agency.
- Maintains, enhances or promotes technical excellence by participation and active leadership in professional societies, groups, symposia/conferences on a national or international level.



- Receives invitations to serve as lecturer, presenter or member of committees or panels at national and international meetings.

# Non-AST Positions

**NOTE: The following are only sample performance elements that may be used as a conceptual guide for development of job related standards for your staff.**

**Critical Element** (Describe the function or job responsibility/duties to be performed)

Below are examples of “Meets Expectations” or Level 3 standards that could be used to address the Critical Element.

- Develops and implements project plans that ensure that the requirements are defined, approved by schedule, and meet major milestones as established by project.
- Conducts complex analysis and development studies that result in new design guidelines for program/mission operating procedures. New guidelines meet technical and general engineering techniques, principles and approaches that are accepted by the engineering community.
- Serves on preliminary and critical design reviews to determine and develop project requirements that meet customer and project needs.
- Manages significant elements or phases of Center/Agency projects within established deadlines and budget.
- Completes project assignments and addresses safety concerns within established deadlines and in accordance with standard technical and engineering practices.
- Identifies the need for and oversees transition to new technology using *accepted*
- cost effective methods and according to schedule.
- Develops, analyzes and documents data from testing and experiments while adhering to standard safety practices.
- Ensures short and/or long-range program planning to facilitate funding.

Although Collaboration/Teamwork; Communication, and Innovation and Creativity are not required Critical Elements, they are integral to accomplishing most if not all assignments. Therefore, supervisors are encouraged to incorporate them in the performance standards. Below are examples of “Meets Expectations” or Level 3 standards for each category.

**Sample Collaboration and Teamwork performance standard:**

- Independently collaborates with key Center/NASA management and customers/partners to obtain specific project requirements, clarification of

product/service needs, and to address/resolve problems that impact the project.

*(Quality/Time-based)*

- *Measure: Positive feedback from internal and external customers. Follows through on customer expectations in accordance with established time frames.*  
\*\*

#### **Sample Communication performance standard:**

- Communicates to identify or solve problems and reach decisions. Observes confidentiality and uses discretion in sharing work related information, skills and knowledge with others. Oral and written communication (including electronic communications) demonstrates understanding and knowledge of area of technical expertise/functional area; responds within 24 hours to emails and other written requests. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Customer satisfaction rates. Responds within established timeframes. Demonstrated knowledge of program area.* \*\*

#### **Sample Innovation and Creativity performance standards:**

- Leads or serves as team member on organization's business process improvement team to recommend or enhance organization's current or new processes/procedures. Leverages the capabilities of colleagues to foster innovative thinking and to reconcile conflicting stakeholder interests. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Active leadership or participation on team.*
- Initiates plan of action by September 20-- that identifies effective and valid recommendations, improvements, and solutions to ensure project/program milestones are met and within budget guidelines. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: The plan is well-written, concise and provides recommendations, improvements, and solutions that are accepted and implemented by established deadline(s).*

# Administrative/Professional Positions

**NOTE: The following are only sample performance elements that may be used as a conceptual guide for development of job related standards for your staff.**

**Critical Element** (Describe the function or job responsibility/duties to be performed)

Below are examples of “Meets Expectations” or Level 3 standards that could be used to address the Critical Element.

- Manages assigned program(s) in accordance with current Federal laws and regulations. Updates or ensures responsible party updates governing Langley Management System (LMS) documents on schedule.
- Plans, organizes, coordinates and prioritizes workload to meet customer needs and specific program deadlines. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Timeliness, accuracy, responsiveness.*
- Provides status reports and updates on major projects to supervisor by established deadlines. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Timeliness, accuracy, responsiveness.*
- Identifies, analyzes and resolves technical problems based on appropriate Federal laws and regulations related to projects/programs, keeping supervisor abreast of issues that may result in complex issues or program deadline change(s). *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Consistently raises issues, follows through in order to successfully accomplish task.*
- Provides information, statistical data, and reports in accordance with Center and NASA policies and requirements by established deadlines. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Respond to customer inquiries within 24 hours of receipt of request.*

- Responds to Freedom of Information Act requests by Center's established deadline.
- Notifies supervisor of any complications or issues. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Information/data is accurate and meets FOIA request by established deadline. Provides recommended solutions to complications or issues.*
- Complies with current environmental, financial, IT security and/or other Center requirements. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Demonstrates an awareness of institutional and program requirements. Completes Agency mandatory training by established deadlines.*

Although Collaboration/Teamwork; Communication, and Innovation and Creativity are not required Critical Elements, they are integral to accomplishing most if not all assignments. Therefore, supervisors are encouraged to incorporate them in the performance standards. Below are examples of "Meets Expectations" or Level 3 standards for each category.

#### **Sample Collaboration and Teamwork performance standards:**

- Serves on Center and/or Agency level committee to develop new program, enhance current program or to resolve issues in program area that impacts Center, specific organizations at the Center or organization. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Demonstrated knowledge of program area; positive feedback by committee.*
- Consults and advises managers, supervisor, and senior management on program issues or new requirements that impact the Center. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Demonstrated knowledge of program area; positive feedback by customer.*
- Builds and maintains positive relationships with all levels of customers and stakeholders to ensure key parties understand Agency/Center program expectations and requirements. *(Quality)*

- *Measure: Positive feedback by customer. \*\**
- Collaborates and benchmarks with other NASA Center counterparts to help resolve technical problems or exchange information in program area(s).  
(Quality)
  - *Measure: Positive feedback by customers on program knowledge base and ability to provide recommendations/solutions to problems. \*\**

#### **Sample Communication performance standards:**

- Promotes and exchanges verbal and written information for improvement in keeping with Agency goals. (Quality)
  - *Measure: Communicates with accuracy and clarity. Written materials follow NASA's prescribed standards and style and are not returned for substantial revision more than twice.*
- Communicates information, results and decisions in program areas to customers by negotiated timeline. (Quality/Quantity/Time-based)
  - *Measure: Meets deadlines and/or requests information or additional resources as required without jeopardizing the integrity or progress of the program or project.*
- Informs appropriate Center population or relevant organizations of new, changed, or current program requirements in a well-designed, concise communication (written or oral). Counsels and advises customers and management of new requirements or changes to requirements that affect how the Center conducts its business. (Quality/Time-based)
  - *Measure: Format of communication is logical, communicates with accuracy and clarity. Communication takes place in a timely fashion/in time for necessary action. Demonstrates knowledge of program area.*
- Presents new recommendations/solutions to problems and issues in program area(s) to management for approval. Format of presentation follows NASA's prescribed standards and style. (Quality)

**\*\* REMINDER: Customer feedback/complaints should be reviewed carefully for legitimacy and accuracy. \*\***

- *Measure: Communication is accurate and clear. Provides sufficient data and information for action or decision making.*
- Organizes and presents effective communication to diverse audience on non-routine and/or complex issues or topics. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Communication is accurate and clear, meets the intended level of audience.*

**Sample Innovation and Creativity performance standard:**

- Independently improves or creates internal processes to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in program areas. Develops solutions, tools or methods to implement new or existing program requirements within established time limits. *(Quality/Time- based)*
  - *Measure: Implements approved solutions, tools or methods in a timely manner or by established deadlines.*

# Technician Positions

**NOTE: The following are only sample performance elements that may be used as a conceptual guide for development of job related standards for your staff.**

**Critical Element** (Describe the function or job responsibility/duties to be performed)

Below are examples of “Meets Expectations” or Level 3 standards that could be used to address the Critical Element.

- Conducts research test(s) and experiment(s) based on customer requirements/specifications in accordance with Center and Agency safety policies and rules and by established deadlines(s). Changes to test/experiment requirements and/or schedule are reported in advance to the Team Lead or Supervisor and negotiated in advance of the original deadline with the customer. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Completes tests and experiments in accordance with customer specifications and requirements by established deadlines. Provides regular status reports of changes to requirements or schedules to key parties and the Team Leader or supervisor. Quality level of the tests/experiments conducted is supported by customer feedback and adherence to safe practices.*
- Demonstrates technical knowledge and understanding of facilities research capabilities, deciding on equipment, hardware, and/or instrumentation needs and other resources required for tests/experiments. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Selects appropriate equipment or instrumentation for specific test/experiments using accepted technical practices and techniques.*
- Designs, develops, manufactures and fabricates research hardware for scientific, aeronautical, exploration, and/or aerospace programs based on project specifications, requirements and deadlines. Work is accomplished in keeping with safety and occupational health standards, rules, regulations, policies and procedures. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Meets customer’s final product (quality) by deadline.*



- Attends and participates in design reviews to establish requirements, materials, cost and delivery estimates and required fabrication and manufacturing processes to complete the product within the established schedule. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Data and estimates provided are sound, realistic and meet the customer's requirements. Demonstrates knowledge of proper fabrication and manufacturing processes required for the particular job. Product is delivered by deadline.*
- Provides technical design modifications for electrical enhancements to model/facility systems in accordance with Center and OSHA safety rules, regulations, policies and procedures. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Demonstrates knowledge of facility's electrical hardware. Uses proper practices and techniques to provide required enhancements in a safe and efficient manner.*
- Maintains required job certification(s) for position (e.g., Crane Operator, Chemical Worker, etc.) in accordance with Center policies. Recertification is kept up to date. *(Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Pursues known job certifications as required and to avoid lapse in certification.*
- Attends and actively participates in required monthly Branch safety meetings. Prepares for and participates in safety inspections and audits. Corrects deficiencies to ensure compliance with established law or policy and within established timelines. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Attends scheduled meetings, participates by making recommended solutions to safety issues, recognizes deficiencies and corrects prior to inspection or audit. Cooperates during inspections or audits. Responds to safety inspector's request and takes timely corrective action in the event of findings.*
- Although Collaboration/Teamwork; Communication, and Innovation and Creativity are not required Critical Elements, they are integral to accomplishing most if not all assignments. Therefore, supervisors are encouraged to incorporate them in the performance standards. Below are examples of "Meets Expectations" or Level 3 standards for each category.

**Sample Collaboration and Teamwork performance standard:**

- Collaborates with researchers and other customers to assess requirements, provide necessary instrumentation, hardware or equipment. Addresses and resolves problems that impact the project. *(Quality/Quantity)*
  - *Measure: Positive feedback from customers or co-workers about employee's responsiveness and quality of service provided. Issues are identified and raised to avoid delays in meeting established deadlines.\*\**

**Sample Communication performance standards:**

- Oral and written (including electronic) communications are accurate, courteous, clear, well-organized and demonstrate technical knowledge of project. Responds within 72 hours to email and other written requests. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Communication is coherent and timely as provided by customer satisfaction feedback.\*\**
- Interacts with researchers and other customers, keeping all parties informed of progress on assigned tests or experiments. Weekly oral/written status report is due to team lead or supervisor each Tuesday. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Quality and timeliness of status report – provides clear and concise issues relayed by customer and provides plan of action/solutions. Handles issues independently commensurate with grade level, job duties and/or visibility of project.*

**Sample Innovation and Creativity performance standards:**

- Participates and serves as team member on organization's Business Process Improvement Team (BPIT) to recommend or enhance the organization's current or new processes/procedures. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Actively participates as a team member.*
- Identifies 1 -2 recommendations for improvements and solutions to processes, products and/or facility research capabilities to help reduce costs and waste. *(Quality/ Cost Effectiveness)*
  - *Measure: At least one recommendation, improvement and/or solution is accepted and implemented in whole or in part during the appraisal cycle. Recommendation helps to measurably reduce cost or waste.*

# Clerical Positions

**NOTE: The following are only sample performance elements that may be used as a conceptual guide for development of job related standards for your staff.**

**Critical Element** (Describe the function or job responsibility/duties to be performed)

Below are examples of “Meets Expectations” or Level 3 standards that could be used to address the Critical Element.

- Demonstrates knowledge of office and Center administrative processes and procedures. Completes assigned work within established deadlines. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Records are maintained in accordance with standard procedures, files are easily retrieved, assignments are completed by deadlines and Center processes and procedures are followed.*
- Demonstrates knowledge and skill in using Center administrative systems (e.g., Fed Traveler, N-PROP, Correspondence Log, Key Activities, NAAS, P-Card) in accordance with Center policies and procedures. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Obtains systems training, reading manuals or instructions and applies the learned skills in operation of systems as demonstrated by completing assigned work accurately and timely.*
- Prepares correspondence and other materials in accordance with Center and/or Agency policy, guidelines and requirements. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Prepares correspondence following appropriate policy. Products do not require substantial revision.*
- Makes travel arrangements and prepares orders in accordance with Center and Agency policies, processes and procedures. Ensures that adjustments or revisions to travel arrangements. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Prepares travel orders using proper procedures and systems and are approved prior to travel dates. Makes known adjustments to travel arrangements are completed so as not to affect travel plans. Notifies the traveler when adjustments are completed.)*
- Makes credit card purchases and other such transactions in accordance with Center, Agency and Federal policy, processes and procedures within 1 – 2 business days from

request. Maintains documentation to track travel, credit card/purchase requests or other office transactions in accordance with governing Center and Federal rules, regulations, policies and procedures. *(Quality/Time-based/Cost-Effectiveness)*

- *Measure: Purchase requests and other transactions are made within policy guidelines and are acted upon within 48 hours of the request. Ensures travel and credit card purchases do not exceed allotted budget. Informs supervisor of anomalies or forewarns if estimated costs may exceed the budget. Maintains required receipts and documentation, making them readily available if requested.*
- Prepares notification, agenda and minutes for monthly Branch meetings. Ensures supervisor receives notification and final agenda prior to the scheduled meeting and minutes are issued within 3 – 5 days following the meeting. Follows up on action items to ensure completion by due date. *(Quality/Time-based)*

#### **Sample Collaboration and Teamwork performance standard:**

- Collaborates with co-workers, counterparts and both internal and external customers to provide general information about the office and its procedures or to obtain information to complete assigned tasks. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Customer feedback demonstrates employee successfully assisted and completed request or directed customer to correct point of contact. \*\**

#### **Sample Communication performance standard:**

- Oral and written (including electronic) communications are accurate, courteous, clear and well-organized and demonstrate knowledge of office practices and procedures. Responds to email or other written requests within 72 hours or three business days. Directs customers to the appropriate point of contact for more complex or technical requests or issues. *(Quality/Time-based)*
  - *Measure: Communication is coherent, accurate and timely as provided by customer satisfaction feedback and review of written communications within established time frames. Keeps supervisor and/or customer abreast of status.*

**Sample Innovation and Creativity performance standards:**

- Participates and/or serves as a team member or leader on the organization's Business Process Improvement Team (BPIT) to recommend new or enhance current processes/procedures. *(Quality)*
  - *Measure: Actively participates on the BPIT.*
- Identifies 1 – 2 recommendations, improvements, and/or solutions to enhance the efficiency of the office. *(Quality/Quantity)*
  - *Measure: At least one recommendation, improvement, and/or solution is accepted and implemented in part or in whole during the appraisal cycle.*

## Distinguishing Levels of Performance

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As you know, performance standards for each performance element must be written to describe the “Meets” or “Fully Successful” level of the specific job position and grade level (knowledge and skills required by the position). Performance standards written at the “Meets” level must require the employee to consistently and reliably perform all the duties of the position with no greater level of supervision than is described by the position description. This is an important fact because it serves as the baseline for the employee’s overall rating and helps you gauge whether they fell above or beneath that line.

Differentiating levels of performance is important because it signals to your workforce the value you place on a job well done. Examples of behaviors you should observe at the five performance summary levels appear on the following pages. These behaviors are by no means exhaustive, but should provide you with a good idea of what to look for and how to justify the decisions you make when assigning performance summary ratings to your employees.

As mentioned in the Introduction, one of the changes to the EPCS for the 2012-13 performance cycle is the inclusion of “Significantly Exceeds Expectations” or Level 5 indicators. Supervisors are required to establish and document performance indicators for “Significantly Exceeds Expectations” or Level 5 for each critical element on the performance plan. For the 2012-13 performance season, supervisors may use/modify the generic performance indicators provided below. However, follow-on performance cycles require the indicators to be sufficiently objective and specific to help distinguish achievable performance at higher than “Meets” level from performance that merely meets the Level 3 standard.

## Distinguished (Level 5)

Use this rating level when the  
employee:

### Creativity, Innovation, and Originality

- Demonstrates an exceptionally high degree of originality, innovation and creativity

### Problem Solving

- Anticipates and identifies potential issues that may impact completion of work; devises and carries out effective plans to manage such challenges, including adjustments to priorities and work schedules
- Develops and implements highly successful solutions to complex problems or situations

### Independence/Autonomy

- Demonstrates unusually high initiative and autonomy while continuing to achieve all expectations for regular duties.

### Customer Service

- Produces a rare high rate of customer satisfaction which clearly reflects favorably on the employee's organization and demonstrates meaningful contributions toward achievement of the mission
- Exceptional customer service in difficult situations

### Communications and Collaboration/Teamwork

- Establishes trusting working relationships in contentious situations
- Effectively builds consensus and inspires team members/colleagues toward goal accomplishments
- Develops leadership in others through coaching, mentoring, guiding and recognizing
- Makes maximum use of the diverse talents of team members
- Consistently works effectively in diverse, cross-organizational, and uncertain environments
- Facilitates effective adaptation to controversial or difficult changes within

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Distinguished (Level 5)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Use this rating level when the employee:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the organization</li> <li>Shares best practices and lessons learned with colleagues and stakeholders</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Results Driven</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accomplishments/results that far exceeded the norm;</li> <li>Produces results that are exceptionally accurate and precise</li> <li>Delivers work products that are superior/breakthrough in critical mission areas</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Maintain/Increase Efficiency</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meets timeliness and efficiency standards in the face of obstacles or resource constraints, e.g., unusually heavy work load, exceptionally short deadlines, significant staff shortages</li> <li>Excels in cost containment while maintaining exceptional quality</li> <li>Consistently completes quality work ahead of schedules and deadlines by adapting to rapid changes by adjusting priorities</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Expertise</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is a technical pioneer</li> <li>Is viewed as the preeminent authority in the field</li> <li>Is frequently sought out for opinions by peers and/or industry Is highly regarded for expertise</li> <li>Is widely recognized for achievements</li> <li>Is a risk taker</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Accomplished (Level 4)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Use this rating level when the employee:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently delivers thorough, high quality work products</li> <li>Completes work in accordance with prescribed deadlines and does not require major, substantive changes</li> <li>Seeks new ideas and approaches to develop creative solutions to challenging problems or situations</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates a high level of expertise in the field</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fully Successful (Level 3)</b></p> <p><b>Use this rating level when the employee:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completes work as instructed, in accordance with prescribed guidelines and timeframes</li> <li>• Actively participates in meetings and projects</li> <li>• Is a team player</li> <li>• Communicates effectively with superiors, peers subordinates and customers</li> <li>• May exceed some performance requirements but not enough to meet the Accomplished level</li> </ul>
<p><b>Needs Improvement (Level 2)</b></p> <p><b>Use this rating level when the employee:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivers products that occasionally require extensive revision</li> <li>• Occasionally misses deadlines that impact but are not detrimental to the assignment, project or program</li> <li>• Does not always work at the appropriate level of autonomy expected for his/her pay grade</li> <li>• Sometimes needs help working on assignments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unacceptable (Level 1)</b></p> <p><b>Use this rating level when the employee:</b></p> <p>Note: When you determine an employee is at an unacceptable level, please contact one of the following for assistance:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misses deadlines without clear or valid reasons</li> <li>• Generally delivers products that do not meet expectations</li> <li>• Seems to be ill-suited for the job</li> <li>• Performance is sub-par</li> </ul>

## OHCM Contacts

**If you have further questions about the Employee Performance Communication System, please contact:**

<b>Specialists</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Org Codes</b>
<b>Katrina Young Performance</b>	<b>katrina.l.young@nasa.gov</b> x43868 Bldg 2101, Room 120 MS 033	ALL
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**To download NASA Forms and to learn more, visit:**

<https://server-mpo.arc.nasa.gov/Services/NEFS/Home.tml>

Supervisory Performance Plan and Appraisal NASA Form 1762

Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal NASA Form 1763

Employee Performance Progress Review/Annual Appraisal Input NASA Form 1729

LaRC Office of Human Capital Management <http://ohcm.larc.nasa.gov>

NASA Human Resources (HR) Portal <https://hrportal.nasa.gov>

## GLOSSARY

**Appraisal Period:** The one-year period, from May 1 through April 30, for which performance shall be appraised and a Rating of Record prepared.

**Critical Element:** A work assignment or responsibility of such importance that unacceptable performance in that element would result in a determination that an employee's overall performance summary rating is Unacceptable.

**Narrative Summary:** A written, or otherwise recorded, summary that succinctly addresses an employee's significant performance achievement(s) or result(s) or observable behavior(s) relative to his/her performance elements and standards for the appraisal period.

**Performance Appraisal:** The review and evaluation of an employee's performance against the performance elements and standards described in the employee's performance plan.

**Performance Document:** Any record (written or recorded), recommendation, support action, documentation, input, feedback, or responses that pertain to the accomplishment of the work assignments and responsibilities described in the employee's performance plan.

**Performance Indicator:** Information and examples (not all inclusive) reflecting performance that may meet expectations for the level at which they are written.

**Performance Plan:** All the written or otherwise recorded performance elements that describe what the employee is expected to accomplish during the appraisal period and the standards against which the employee's performance shall be appraised.

**Performance Standard:** Statement of performance thresholds, requirements, or expectations written at the Meets Expectations performance level (Level 3) for each critical element, commensurate with the knowledge and skills required for the position. Standards communicate what the employee must do to achieve to meet the performance element.

**Rating Official:** The individual (usually the immediate supervisor) who is responsible for engaging the employee as a partner in the establishment of the employee's performance elements and standards in addition to appraising in a fair, accurate, and timely manner the employee's performance against the performance plan at the end of the appraisal period.

**Rating of Record:** The written, or otherwise recorded, performance summary rating level assigned at the end of an appraisal period or when required by special circumstances (i.e. reassignment or separation). The Rating of Record must be supported by a narrative summary of the employee's performance.

**Reviewing Official:** The individual (usually the second level supervisor, branch/section head, or organizational unit manager (OUM) who is responsible for ensuring that an employee's performance plan is complete and the rating given was provided in a fair, accurate, and timely manner.